
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 August 2019

by S Hunt BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/H0520/Z/19/3230276

Land situated directly to the east of the High Street Bridge over the A14, directly north of the A14, South of Cambridge Road and west of the Fenstanton A14 Services

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Chris Meredith of Clearview Media against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00231/ADV, dated 11 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 4 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is a wooden structure featuring a 16ft x 8ft pvc sign.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of a wooden structure featuring a 16ft x 8ft pvc sign as applied for. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations.

Procedural Matter

2. I observed on my site visit that the sign is in place, but notwithstanding this I am considering the application with reference to the submitted drawings. I note the description refers to the imperial dimensions of the sign, nevertheless the evidence includes a scale plan with the dimensions noted in metric. I have no reason to dispute that the sign which is in place is any different to the supplied dimensions.
3. The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (May 2019) has been adopted since the application was determined, replacing the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1995). The reason for refusal included reference to emerging Policy LP13 'Design Implementation' of the proposed submission version of the Local Plan. In the adopted Local Plan the same policy is referenced LP12. There have been no changes to the policy wording which affect this appeal. I have considered adopted Policy LP12 in determining this appeal and the previous 1995 Local Plan Policy En30 no longer forms part of the development plan.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed sign on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

5. The site lies alongside the busy A14 dual carriageway on the edge of the settlement of Fenstanton, close to a flyover junction. The sign is located in the corner of an open area of land, adjacent to rough vegetation. A service area is situated a short distance away including a hotel, roadside restaurant and petrol filling station. There is a range of signage associated with the service area including totem signs and banners, together with directional signage on the dual carriageway. There are a number of new residential developments in the vicinity, including houses under construction immediately alongside the A14 past the nearby flyover.
6. I consider the character of the immediate area to be mixed edge of settlement rather than predominately rural as suggested by the Council. Together with the nearby service area and new residential development, the settlement is clearly visible to the rear of the open field.
7. The non-illuminated sign is only fully visible to users of vehicles travelling along the east bound carriageway. It is a sizeable structure but not excessively so when viewed in the context of the other signage in the vicinity. The backdrop of vegetation reduces its visual impact, screening it from wider views. Moreover, this area of vegetation helps to avoid any unacceptable cumulative effects with the service area signage. The sign is not unduly intrusive or prominent in this particular location.
8. I can therefore find no conflict with Policy LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (2019) parts a and b which require proposals to contribute positively to area character and to successfully integrate with the landscape, nor with paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
9. The five standard conditions as set out in the Regulations would apply, and would be consistent with those recommended by Highways England.

Conclusion

10. I conclude that there is no significant adverse effect on the visual amenity of the area and therefore the appeal is allowed.

S Hunt

Inspector